

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

(Amended) The elongated cylindrical plug body 110 has an outer diameter D_2 that is substantially equal to an inside diameter D_1 of the lumen 128 of the vascular access port 120. Therefore, when the plug body 110 is inserted into the lumen 128 of the access port 120, during periods in which the dialysis process is suspended, the flow of blood 132 into the access port 120 is prevented. Additionally, since the length L_2 of the plug body 110 is substantially equal to the length L_1 of the access port 120, stagnant blood 143 will not remain in the lumen 128 nor will residual debris accumulate therein. Plug body 110 also includes a hollow central core 116 which serves to increase the flexibility of the plug body 110.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

(Amended) Referring now to Figs. 5 and 6, there is illustrated an apparatus for facilitating vascular access constructed in accordance with another embodiment of the subject invention and designated generally by reference numeral 200. Apparatus 200 includes a vascular access port 220 and an elongated cylindrical plug body 210 and is substantially similar in structure and function to apparatus 100 shown in Figs. 3 and 4. It differs however, in that the locking mechanism 214 includes helical external threads 244 associated with the outer diameter D_2 of the plug body 210. Additionally, in this embodiment, internal threads 222 are associated with the lumen 228 of the access port 220 and are adapted and configured for receiving external threads 244 of plug body 210. Like apparatus 100, the locking mechanism is engaged by grasping handle portion 212